

Introduce vocational edn to ensure jobs for madrasa students: PM

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has emphasised the need to provide general and vocational education for Madrasa students alongside religious education to ensure more employment opportunities for them.

"We want to introduce vocational education at every level of the education system to bring up a skilled population," she said while addressing the opening ceremony of the International Literacy Day 2009 at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday.

Hasina in her address urged every educated citizen of the country to impart literacy to at least one child.

"I believe, through such process, illiteracy will be removed from the country."

She said developing countries like Bangladesh should enlighten its every citizen with education through all-out coordinated efforts.

But, Bangladesh could not attain stable and desired development in all sectors, including education, as democracy in the country could not proceed uninterrupted.

"The hope is still alive as efforts are on," Hasina said.

The PM observed that the present government has taken

the charge of the country with scores of problems "created due to misrule in the last seven years."

That is why the government has to give special attention to every sector to put things straight.

"We have set our target to advance our primary education sector fast. We have already brought equity in the salary structure of primary schoolteachers."

"Apart from continuing the previous programmes, the present government has taken up new initiatives to raise the literacy rate in the country," the PM told her audience.

She asked the local administration and people's representatives to work hard to expedite government's primary education programmes.

Hasina deplored that the previous Awami League government through its concerted efforts had increased the country's literacy rate up to 65.5 percent.

But, because of the next governments, the rate presently came down to 53 percent in a digression.

The PM informed the function that the present government wants to fully remove illiteracy by 2014 and ensure admission of every child to schools by 2011.

"We all have to come for-

ward unitedly to get to these goals," she said.

Hasina mentioned the government's initiative to update the country's education policy through the reforms recommended by a national committee of expert academicians.

The draft education policy has already been submitted to her, and following her order, it has been placed on the education ministry's website, she said.

The PM said supplementary education programmes of the government for bringing the dropped out children back into the mainstream education flow are being implemented.

She said already second National Plan of Action has been formulated and Education Project-2 is being implemented to keep the attained literacy rate advancing and expediting skill based training activities.

Besides, Hard to Reach project's second phase and Reaching Out of School Children are being implemented to bring the urban labourers' children under the literacy programmes and to ensure education for disadvantaged children.

Hasina noted that there is no alternative to education for making human lives truly enlightened and meaningful

and that's why modern state and society is relentlessly trying to educate its total population.

The PM emphasised creating massive public awareness, fixing future action plan and timely implementation of programmes to ensure literacy of every individual.

"Literacy is the first stair of education. An educated population is the driving force of a country," she said.

Realising the importance of education, she said, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had nationalised primary schools and jobs of the primary teachers.

"But, had Bangabandhu not been killed in 1975, Bangladesh's overall situation, including its literacy rate, would not be in such a bad condition," the PM said.

"Now we are strongly determined to complete the unfinished task of the Father of the Nation. It is our duty to give literacy to every citizen and educate them with vocational education," Hasina said.

Primary and Mass Education Minister M Afsarul Amin chaired the function, addressed, among others, by State Minister for Primary Education Md Motahar Hossain and acting secretary Badrul Alam Tarafder.



Foreign Minister Dipu Moni holds talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, right, at his residence in New Delhi yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Female edn gets priority in draft national policy

WASIM BIN HABIB

The draft National Education Policy 2009 underscored the importance of female education as it adopted several strategies to ensure women empowerment as well as their overall development.

The policy recommended bringing out women from the cocoon of household chores, including family welfare, child rearing and housekeeping and ensuring their active participation in poverty alleviation and socio-economic development.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid submitted the draft copy of the new education policy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office at Jatiya Sangsad Bhabana on

Monday. The draft policy, which was uploaded on the education ministry website, envisages basic changes to set the country's outmoded education system in tune with the fast-moving world.

It was aimed at decreasing gender disparity and encouraging women to science, vocational and technical education.

The policy suggested specific allocation for female education sector in the budget and formation of a special fund for increasing female education rate at all levels of education.

It recommended incorporating positive and progressive images of women and their equal rights in the pri-

mary-level curriculum for changing social behaviour towards women.

A number of life sketches of great women and write-ups of other women would have to be included in the curriculum of primary and secondary levels, it said, adding that the topics 'gender studies' and 'reproductive health' would have to be included in the curriculum of secondary level.

Students irrespective of male and female have full liberty to choose subjects in the secondary level and female students would not be encouraged to special subjects like home economics.

"Female students would have to be encouraged to science as well as professional education like engineering,

medical, law and business," the policy said recommending allocation of necessary budget for higher education of women.

It suggested that polytechnic institutes for female students be increased so that the students who cannot get admitted into the secondary level can receive technical or vocational education.

It also recommended arranging special stipends and bank loans on low interest rates for the poor and meritorious female students so that they pursue higher studies and do research works.

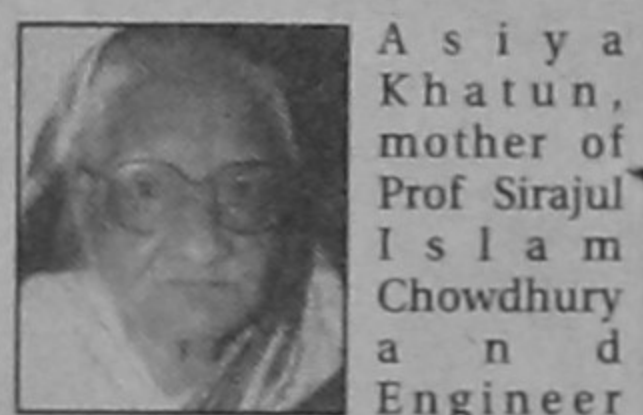
Women's participation in education-related policymaking and decision-making issues in primary, secondary and higher education levels would have to be ensured, the policy added.

It asked the education institutions to strictly follow the rules and regulation formulated on sexual harassment and torture.

The government formed a 16-member committee on April 6 to review the report of Shamsul Haque Education Committee of 1997 to formulate a modern national education policy in line with the report of Quadrat-e-Khuda Education Commission of 1974.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Asiya Khatun, mother of Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and Amanul Islam Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, passed away at Bangladesh Cancer Society Hospital yesterday at the age of 92, says a press release.

She was buried at Azimpur old graveyard. Her quikhwani will be held at her residence after Asr prayers on Friday.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 37th death anniversary of AKM Fazlul Kabir Chowdhury, leader of the opposition in the then East Pakistan Assembly and father of ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Housing and Public Works, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil, Qurankhwani and destitute feeding programme will be held at Gohira under Raozan in Chittagong.

Begum Sultana Rashid

METRO DESK

Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Begum Sultana Rashid, wife of the late MA Rashid, former secretary to the government, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to pray for his departed soul.

Monsoon low over north Bay

UNB, Dhaka

A monsoon low developed over the northwest Bay and the Bangladesh-West Bengal coast, is triggering squally wind.

"The low is likely to intensify. Steep pressure gradient persists over the north Bay," said a Met office special bulletin yesterday noon.

Under its influence, a deep convection is taking place over the north Bay.

"Squally weather may continue to affect the maritime ports and the coastal regions of Bangladesh," the bulletin said.

Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla seaports have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the north Bay have been advised to take shelter "immediately."

17 ASPs promoted to addl SP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday promoted 17 assistant superintendents of police (ASP) to the rank of additional superintendent of police.

The home minister and state minister approved their promotion yesterday afternoon, an official of the ministry told The Daily Star preferring not to be quoted.

The promotion came a day after the government promoted 494 senior civil servants on Monday.

All the police officials are from the 20th batch of cadre service and were deprived of promotion during BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

Appeal for help

METRO DESK



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital.

However, it is not possible for his father Md Sultan Howlader, a driver by profession, to bear the expenses of his treatment, which needs Tk 5 lakh.

Sultan has urged the affluent people of the society to extend their help to save his son.

Financial contributions can be sent to Md Sultan Howlader, Savings Account No - 0310002166, National Credit and Commerce Bank, Bijoy Nagar Branch, Dhaka.



National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports stages a sit-in at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting the police action on its march towards Petrobangla office at Karwan Bazar on September 2.

US Dy Asstt Secy of State Owen due today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Michael S Owen arrives today on a two-day visit to Bangladesh.

During his visit, Owen will meet with Bangladesh government officials, parliamentarians, business people and members of the civil society.

The deputy assistant secretary will discuss a range of regional and bilateral issues, says a press release.

Cocaine worth Tk 2.5cr seized, five arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-1) seized 2.5 pounds of cocaine worth around Tk 2.5 crore and arrested five people at Tongi in Gazipur yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Nannu Miah, 61, Nuru Miah, 52, Al Amin Shimul, 27, Sabuj Kader, 26, and Arafat, 21.

Rab official Raihan Asgar Khan told The Daily Star that several Rab members, posing as buyers, reached an agreement with the gang that they would buy cocaine for Tk 1.5 crore. Accordingly, the smugglers handed over a packet of cocaine to them at Markun in Tongi around 2:00pm.

The Rab personnel then revealed their identity and arrested the five, he said.

During the preliminary interrogation, the arrestees said the cocaine was smuggled from Myanmar.

STORMY WEATHER Mawa ferry, launch service suspended

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Movement of ferries, launches and speedboats on Mawa-Kawrakandi route in the river Padma has been suspended since 2:00pm yesterday because of rough weather, resulting from a low developed in the Bay of Bengal.

However, only a Ro-Ro ferry is plying with caution. The fishing boats have taken shelter in the chargs. The wind speed is gradually increasing.

Cautionary signal No. 2 has been hoisted for the river Padma, which has become rough due to stormy weather, BIWTA sources said.

Meanwhile, more than 150 vehicles remained stuck on both sides of the river following the suspension of ferry service, causing suffering to passengers.

Kawrakandi Launch Owners Association General Secretary Monir Hossain said, "The weather has been bad since the morning. As the situation became worse at noon, we stopped operating launches and speedboats on this route."

BIWTA Mawa Assistant General Manager Ashiqur Rahman said ferry service has been suspended after cautionary signal No. 2 was hoisted.

WEATHER TODAY

Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:08pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.1 degrees Celsius at Chittagong.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.7	26.0	81	72
Chittagong	28.0	24.1	93	91
Rajshahi	32.4	25.2	92	75
Khulna	28.5	26.0	92	97
Barisal	27.5	25.5	98	92
Sylhet	35.2	27.1	61	90
Cox's Bazar	27.0	24.2	96	95